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LETTERS OF A SOLDIER

ROBERT WALKER

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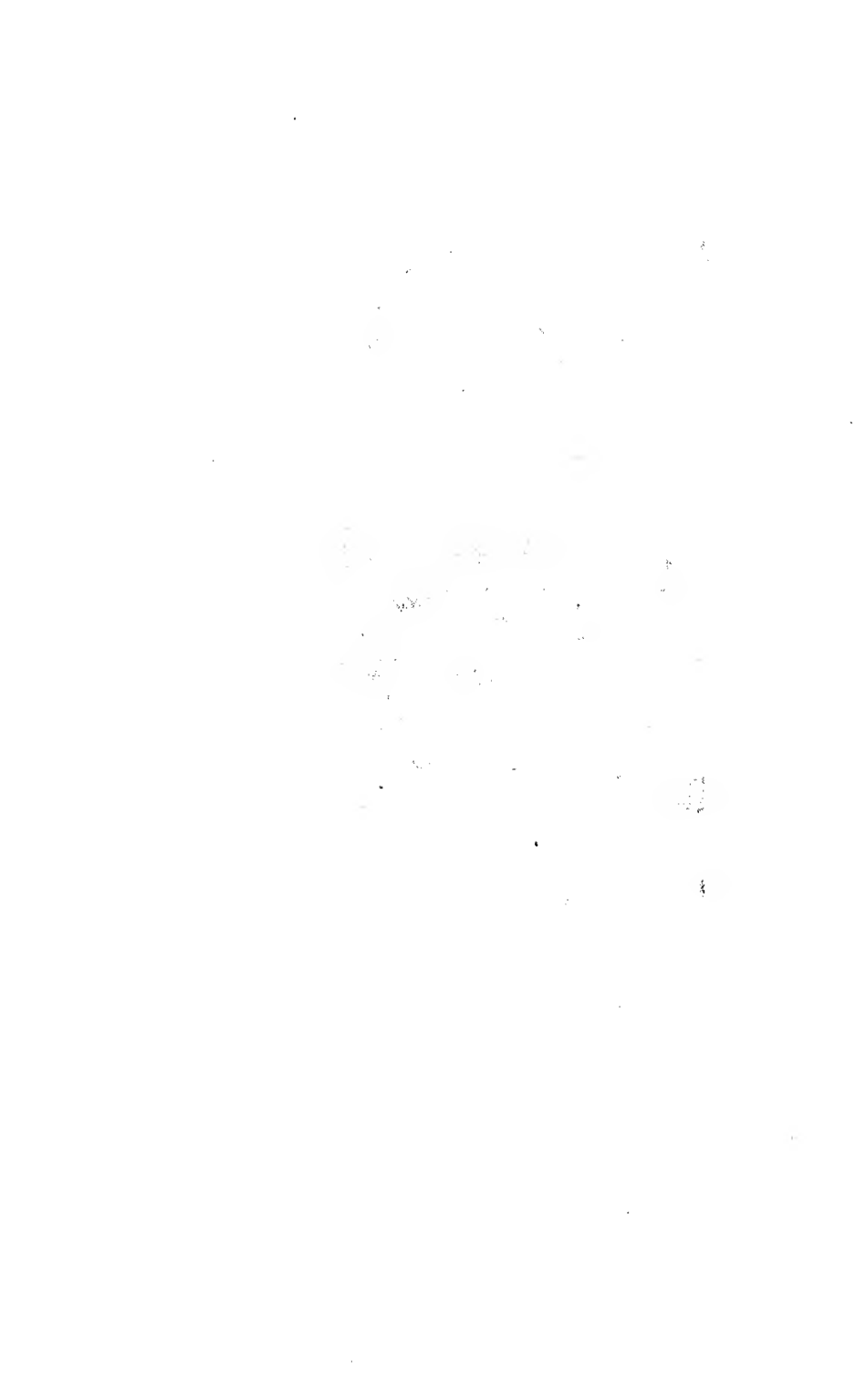
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ROBERT WALKER
Co. H. 90th Ohio Volunteer Infantry



Letters of Robert Walker,
a soldier in the Civil War of 1861-1865.
Biography by Mrs. Hugh Henry West.



Edited by
CLARA A. GLENN



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by
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PREFACE

In order to preserve these letters, tenderly kept by my mother for fifty-four years, up to the time of her death on January 8th, 1916, I am now having them published. The list is incomplete, as many of the letters were destroyed, but enough remain to make an interesting personal account. They are the letters of a young man with a young man's outlook on life, but they contain a great deal of historical information also. It is interesting to notice how the later letters are lacking in all nonsense, and as the war grows more fierce nothing but military news is given. The letter of March 14th, 1863, shows discouragement. There are also, in the letters indications of uncertainty regarding mail.

Mrs. Martha Walker-West, of Logan, Ohio, the youngest and only living member of the immediate family, has written a short biography of the author.

A print from the last photograph of the author is given on the front page. This was taken after a long hard march just before the fatal battle.

The poem in the back of the book was sent home in a letter, words and music printed on a single sheet of paper.

This little volume is given to friends in loving remembrance of my mother, whose life was saddened by the early death of her brother.

CLARA A. GLENN.

BIOGRAPHY

Robert Walker was born November 16, 1841, in Saltlick Township, Perry county, Ohio, in the farm home which he left to enlist for the war. His father died in 1850, when Robert was only nine years old. His school days, therefore, were somewhat disturbed on account of his being the only male person at home. His older brothers were of age at that time and in a few years they were married and went into homes of their own. Robert was the man of the house, and he and dear mother planned and worked together until his country called. Yet, through all of his drawbacks, he got a fair common school education. He was a good boy, not given to bad habits, and he had great respect for his mother and sisters who remained with him in the home until his enlistment. He was always hopeful that he would return to loved ones and home when the cruel war was over, until just before he went into the battle in which he was wounded. He said to a comrade "I feel that something is going to happen." He wrote a line to mother and said, "We are going into battle just now. I have always thought that I would get home, but we can't tell." He died inside of twenty-four hours after he was wounded.

MRS. MARTHA J. WEST.

Logan, Ohio.

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Galitan, Tennessee.

November the 12th, 1862.

Dear Mother,—

I take this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am well and hope that these few lines may find you and the rest of them well.

We have crossed over the Kentucky line and have gone over into Tennessee twenty-five miles. It is a very nice place here and it is not cold either. It is about as warm here now as it is in September in Ohio.

The 31st Ohio regiment is within a mile and a half of here but I have not seen any of them and don't expect to, for we are not through traveling yet. We expect to leave here this afternoon or tomorrow and go to Lebanon, Tennessee. I do not know when we will stop to stay any time nor don't care much, for I have gotten so used to traveling that it does not tire me.

I have not gotten any letters from any of the folks for about two weeks. I must close and march.

Lebanon, Tennessee.

November the 13th, 1862.

Mother, I have time to finish my letter now. I guess we have moved again about ten miles and are in camp for awhile. We have the prettiest place for camp in all Israel, but I do not know how long we will stay. It may be that we will stay one day and night—maybe a week or month.

This morning I saw Co. G of the 31st. It was detailed out for guards.

I shall quit writing for the present. Write soon.

Good-bye.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Lebanon, Tennessee.

November the 13th, 1862.

Dear Sister,—

I take this opportunity of writing to let you know that I am well and hope that these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing.

I have not received any letter from you for a good while, but I suppose you are very busy, perhaps cracking your fingers. I should like very much to get word from you again and from all the rest of the folks. I have written to you and to Martha, to James, to Nelson Spurrier and George, but few letters have I received. Write, if you please, and tell me lots of news about how you are getting along, etc. And if you are married, you need not be ashamed to tell me about it, for I shall find it out anyhow.

I am not married yet, but I expect that I shall be soon, for I go to see my duck pretty regularly. But I generally come back with a chicken in my hand. Tennessee chicken doesn't taste bad.

We get plenty to eat, such as beans, rice, meat, coffee, crackers and chicken. We buy our chicken with the Southern scrip. I have ten dollars of it yet, and some good money--about four dollars. But my stamps have run out and I can't get any more.

I must quit writing.

Andrew Irvin sends his respects to you. He is well.

Thomas Turner and Jack Dishong are not very well.

I hardly know how to tell you to direct. Direct to Robert Walker, 90th O. V. I., Co. H, in care of Capt. Hitchcock, 22nd Brigade and 4th Division of the U. S. army in Tennessee.

No more at present. Write soon and tell the rest to write. Then I will.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Camp Seven Miles from Nashville, Tennessee.

Sunday, November 23, 1862.

Dear Sister,—

I take this opportunity to write you a few lines to let you know that I have not forgotten to write, if you have. I

have not gotten a letter from you for a coon's age. I think that as much news as there is in Saltlick township, you could find something to write about.

I know of some of the news, such as weddings. I heard of Joseph Harrison and Luvina Moore being married, and Trissey Petit and Noah Cofman.

And I heard about that poor unfortunate girl, Mary Campfield, getting her leg broken. I should like to know who she blames for the mischief.

I heard that Nathan Buchanan had gotten his discharge. I want to know if he is sick and how he is getting along. I suppose that you girls have big times with him and James Turner, and Nelson and George Spurrier, for that is all of the boys whom you have in our district.

I think that you ought to have a party occasionally—a play or sprucing party. You girls can have your parties to yourselves this fall, and next fall I think that the soldiers will get home. Then we shall have our parties to ourselves and we won't have any girls to them.

When you write, I want you to tell me what kind of times you have, who is teaching our school, and what Ball's girls and Wests are doing. Tell Spurrier's boys that if they want me to write to them, they must write to me first, for I have written to both of them and got no answer.

You said that you wanted me to get my likeness taken, if it did not cost too much. There is no chance at all here.

Write as soon as this comes to hand and write all the news. Cut some good pieces out of the newspaper and send.

Next time I shall write more. Good-bye.

ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Southeast Camp, 3 miles from Nashville, Tenn.

December the 2nd, 1862.

Dear Mother,—

I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well. I received a letter from you the 30th of November, which stated that you were well. I was glad to hear it.

You said that you had not gotten a letter from me for five weeks. I can't see why the letters don't go through. I write once a week, either to you or one of the girls. I get one from home about every three weeks. Your last letter had no date, too. I don't know how long it was on the road,

but you said that you thought you had a sure chance to send it through; so I supposed that you started it by J. N. Selby, but he never came. The letter was mailed at Louisville, Ky.

I feel very sorry to state to the people of Perry county that J. N. Selby is dishonorably discharged. His discharge was read at the head of the regiment and read as follows: "Mr. J. N. Selby, you are dishonorably discharged for deserting your men in the hearing of the Rebel's cannon. You concealed yourself in a company wagon, worked your way back to Louisville, and there went to the hospital and got on detached duty to clean away the filth about the tents." That I think will be a bore on Selby as long as he lives.

Lieutenant Freeman is not very much better. He went home and did not tell anyone he was going. The Colonel says that he is on a very sandy foundation.

That is enough about our officers. Now a little about Henry. You say he looks well but you did not say who was taking care of him. I want him cared for right and then I shall pay big for it.

If anybody is coming here, or going to send a box of anything to the south, I wish that you would send me a towel and a pair of gloves.

No more at present. Write soon. Direct to 90th O. V. I., Co. H., in care of Capt. N. F. Hitchcock, Nashville, Tenn.

Write often and don't be uneasy about me, for there is no more danger here than there is at home.

Give my respects to all inquiring friends.

Good-bye.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

January the 5th

Respected Sister,—

I am sending you a mussel-shell ring, made out of a shell from the old Tennessee river. I made the ring myself and put the silver sets in it. The sets are pure silver, for I pounded out a quarter of a dollar to make them. They are not as true as they might be but the shell is so hard to work in, that it is a nice job to get them just plumb. If you want a nice ring, send me some gutta-percha buttons by Thomas S. Mains. Send me a dozen if you can get them. Tell Martha the next ring will be hers.

Write soon and let me know if you have got my money yet, and if you get the ring.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Camp Cripple Creek,
February 21st, 1863.

Dear Sister,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am well and hope that these lines will find you enjoying the same blessing.

I received a letter from James the other evening, in which you wrote that you would write next week. When you write I want you to send me four or five stamps, for money won't buy them here. If you don't I shall write three or four letters a day and frank them, until you get tired of franking. I want to write to uncle and I won't frank them to him.

We have fine fun here. We are all Saltlick boys in our tent. W. C. Dundon, T. S. Mains, Wm. McClerg, Bazil Gordon, James Strait, David Sharp, Ezra Rickets, Mad Wells, Andrew Irvin, Thomas Turner, Daniel Henderson, Daniel Grim and myself, are the names of the boys in our bunk.

Harriet, we have had a very wet, muddy winter here, but it is never cold. I could go in my shirt sleeves the coldest days that we have here, if it didn't rain.

I want you to tell me where to write to Robert Buchanan. I don't know whether they have moved or not. And tell me how Young's folks are getting along. Also what Dougan's boys are doing.

I must quit writing for this time. Tell Martha, mother, Mary and T. B. to write and everybody else. Direct to the 90th regiment by way of Nashville, Tenn. Write soon, write often, and tell me all the news.

ROBERT WALKER

March the 4th, 1863.

Well Harriet I am not going to write a letter to you, but I am going to send you a pocket book. I want you to write, soon and tell me if you get the book. Give one of the 10

cents to Martha and oblige me. No more at present.
ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Camp Cripple Creek, Tenn.
March 13th, 1863.

Dear Mother,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am well and hope that this will find you enjoying the same blessing.

We have marching orders at the present time and have had for several days. I do not know whether we shall go or not, and if we do go, I don't know where. The boys are all in good spirits. We have plenty to eat and wear.

I have not received any word from you for several days. I got a letter from Thomas last Saturday. He is well. I have not seen him since we left Murfreesboro.

Mother, I wrote a letter on the 7th of this month, in which I enclosed five dollars. I would send five in this, but I thought I would wait till I had heard from the other. In this, I send you a little present consisting of a postage currency pocket book. I have not anything more to write at this time. I shall write to Mary Awker.

Adieu for this time.

ROBERT WALKER

TO MRS. MARY AWKER

Dear Sister,—

I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well and well satisfied. I received a letter from you, and was glad to hear that you were well. I was also glad to hear that you had made a purchase of a farm. I hope that you will have good luck in getting it paid for. I should like to own that piece that old Bools is on, and if it is not sold when I come home, I shall buy it. I suppose that you will go into the corn business strong this spring,

Tell J. B. to write to me. I should have written to you before this, but it isn't every day that I get to write. I shall write you a longer letter next time. Give my best respects to all inquiring friends.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER AND MARTHA WALKER
Camp Cripple Creek, Tenn., 7 miles from Murfreesboro.

March the 14th, 1863.

Dear Sisters Harriet and Martha Walker,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am still well and hope that these few lines may find you enjoying the same blessing.

I received a letter from you some three or four days ago. Martha, you said that you girls were at a first rate spelling school at our school house. I dreamed last night what made you and Harriet think it was such a good time. I dreamed that Isaac Coleman went home with you and John McNeal with Harriet, and that you all went to mother's house and had a big time together. I think it was enough to make you think it a good time. I want you to write and tell me who did the rest of the beaung. I guess it was Henry Trimmer. I heard that all the boys knee high to a duck were going with the girls, except John Crawford, and he tries but can't come the caper. Now gahals that is pretty cool.

I guess that is enough on this subject, so I shall tell you what kind of weather we have here. We have one clear day and then four rainy ones, and mud comes up as high as Jacob's boots.

We have marching orders now. The orders came to strike tents and be ready to move at a moment's warning. We did so and it rained hard all day and we did not move; so at night we put up our tents again and have them up yet. I don't know when we shall move now, nor do I care.

You wanted me to write and tell you where Jackson Dishong is. He is at Nashville in a hospital. He ought to have a discharge, but they don't often discharge a man here in the army till he is eight days dead and buried. We have had some men to desert in our company. Their names are Toby Jackson and John Ford from Sommerset, Reuben Vansicle from the north part of Perry county, and Levi Wilson. The latter is the son of old Ezra Wilson. The Major went after them but he did not get any of them except John Ford. T. Turner is well

Well, gals, I must close for this time. Write soon and tell me how you and John and Ike get along.

I have nothing more to say; please answer this without delay.

Good-bye for this time.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Camp Cripple Creek, Tenn.

March the 15th, 1863.

Dear Sister,—

I take this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am well and hope that these lines may find you enjoying the same blessing, as health is the greatest blessing that we can enjoy. I received a letter from you last night. I was glad to hear from you and to get those stamps. I had made a raise of five stamps but they are pretty nigh all gone. I wrote a letter to Uncle Abraham but haven't received an answer yet.

You said that Nelson Spurrier was going with Jane McNeal. I suppose that you think that you and he will be some relation. You did not say who was going with Mary Matilda. Thomas Turner is well.

I wrote a letter to you and sent a little pocket book in it, and one to Martha also. I sent mother one with five dollars in it, and another with a little pocket book in it. Still when you write to me put one or two stamps in the letter and I will make it all right when I come home. I don't think it will be long until we all get home.

I am going to see Thomas tomorrow if I am alive and well. I got a letter from Noah Barnes. He is in South Carolina.

Write soon and direct to Murfreesboro, Tenn.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Camp Cripple Creek, Tenn.

April the 15th, 1863.

Dear Sister,—

I sit down on a cracker box to write you a cracking short letter. I am well and hope you are the same; I have not heard from any of you for a good while.

I was at Murfreesboro yesterday and got my picture taken, which I shall send to you. It looks very sour, which is very easily accounted for. On the 10th of April the Saltlick boys all sent their money, some thirty-five dollars and some forty dollars. The Rebels captured a train of cars between Nashville and Murfreesboro and it was reported that our money was on that train, but I guess that it is all a mis-

take. Tell mother to get James to go to Arch Huston and get mine, which is forty dollars. Tell her to keep what she wants, if she wants any, and let James have the rest.

I must close for this time or else I can't send this today.

ROBERT WALKER

P. S. Woman like I must add a postscript. Give my respects to all who inquire after the absent one, and tell mother I won't write any more until I get a letter from her.

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Camp Cripple Creek, Tennessee.

May the 29th, 1863.

Dear Mother,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you. I am well at present and hope that you are. I have not got a letter from any of you since the 16th of this month, but I hope that I shall soon.

We are still in camp at the old place but I don't know how soon we shall leave, for we are under marching orders now and have been for a month.

Water is pretty hard to get here, but it is raining now, so I think water will be plenty again.

The boys say that Vicksburg is in our possession but I have not seen any account of it in the paper yet.

Well, mother, I can tell you that Sam Hook and I are cooking for the company, but I don't think that I shall cook very long, for I think it is as easy to drill as it is to cook, and it is not so hard on clothes. They do not pay us anything for cooking. We have very good grub now. We draw flour, meal, potatoes, beans, lots of sugar, coffee and tea.

The boys are well that come from Saltlick.

I have not much to write at this time, so I shall close.

ROBERT WALKER

TO RUTH A. WALKER

Dear Sister,—

It is with pleasure that I write you a few lines. I got a letter from Thomas the other day. He was well.

I suppose that you war widows wish that the war was over, and so does everybody else. But you folks there have no reason to complain about hard times. You would think

so too, if you were here to see how the women live here. They live on pone and water. Only some chance times they get to milk their cows, then they have a feast. They have money but it doesn't do them any good. Salt is worth 25 cents a pound.

Good bye for this time.

ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Camp Cripple Creek, Tenn.
June the 20th, 1863.

Dear Mother,—

I seat myself to write you a brief letter. I am not well, consequently I shall not write much. Yesterday and today, I have been laid up with a headache, but I feel right smart better this evening. I received a letter from you yesterday. Was glad to hear that you were well.

I think that it will not be long any more till I shall get home to see you all, for the Rebels are working just to our hand now. They are 3,500 strong in Pennsylvania now, and I hope they will get into some parts of Ohio, for that will wake citizens of Ohio to a sense of their duty. If they could see with half an eye what they are bringing on themselves by following in old Vallandigham's steps, or if they could see and feel the effects of war, they would not utter one word of sympathy for the South, to encourage them in their traitorous conduct.

I received a letter from Thomas the 16th. He is well.

The citizens are cutting their wheat. Corn is waist high. Blackberries will be ripe in about a week.

I must close. Write soon.

ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Camp at Bridgeport, Alabama.
November 14th, 1863.

Dear Mother,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am still well and hearty. I received a letter from you a few minutes ago and was glad to hear from you again.

I have got about a wagon load of old letters within the last week. Some of them were written in September.

Times are good here and the old pay-master has come to see us again. I don't know how much money he will give us yet. But I don't expect that we shall get much, for our clothing bill has to be settled this time and it is pretty high, for we lost about twenty dollars worth at Lexington, Ky., and about eleven dollars worth at Stone river, and some at the Battle of Chickamauga. We are allowed forty dollars per year for clothing, but our bills range from sixty-five to ninety-five dollars. Mine is about seventy-two. That won't leave us much this pay day. But I did not come to the army to make money.

Hugh Ferguson is trying to get home on recruit for Co. H. If he gets home he will give you a call, and I want you to use him like a gentleman and give him a good dinner, for he is my mess mate. He, Thomas Turner and Harris. We live by ourselves and keep bachelor's hall. I shall send what money I can spare to you by Hugh. I sold my watch for twelve dollars and bought a Hunter case watch for eleven. I am well satisfied with the change.

In regard to your farming, I think your potatoes did very well, but as for the wheat and buckwheat, it is a rather slim crop. But don't want for any comfort that money will procure for you, that my savings will buy. You said potatoes were worth one dollar per bushel there. I should buy two or three bushels if I could, if I could get them for that here. As for your brough suppers, we have lots of them. They consist of crackers and sow-belly, vulgarly speaking, but we have lots of coffee and plenty of sugar to sweeten it with. We haven't any cream, for the cows are dry. Well I have written enough for this time. Give my best regards to Victoria Primrose and Dr. H. Hadley.

I shall close by subscribing myself,

Your disobedient son.

ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Bridgeport, Alabama.

December the 11th, 1863.

Dear Mother,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you to let you

know how I am getting along. I have got a very bad cold but otherwise I am well.

We arrived from Nashville on the 8th. We were disappointed about going to Columbus. I wrote you when I was at Nashville and told you about losing my pocketbook. One of Co. C boys found it, and gave it to me.

You said you had not heard from Thomas for some time. I have not either. I inquired for him at Stevenson, but they told me that he had gone to his regiment again.

You think soldiering is hard, and so it is, but when one has his health he can get along very well. They are getting up volunteers here for the veteran service. Four hundred and two dollars bounty and thirty days furlough. There are thirty-six of Co. H who have volunteered. Sometimes I have a notion to volunteer, for those who don't, have to be transferred to some other regiment.

A. Irvin has come back to the regiment. Tell Martha Jane that he said he was at our house the night of Crawford's apple-cutting. I should liked to have been there. I can't get an apple down here without paying 25 cents for three apples, and then they taste too strongly of greenbacks.

I must quit writing for this time. Write soon. I don't care how big the paper is, nor how much you write.

Give my best respects to all inquiring friends, if any there be. I shall close by subscribing myself,

Your son

P. S. You sometimes inquire about my morality. I should not be ashamed to have my army proceedings read out to the world.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Bridgeport, Alabama.
December 23rd, 1863.

Dear Sister,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing to you to let you know that I am well, fat and hearty, and able for my allowance. I received a letter from mother and was glad to hear from you all, but I was sorry to hear that Martha was sick. I hope that she has recovered before this time.

I should like to be at home now to see you all, and to spend the holidays, but I shall have to spend them in Alabama. We are going to have a big Christmas dinner here. We

shall have crackers and bacon and bacon and crackers and coffee to top off with.

It might be interesting to hear of what kind of weather we have down here. The nights are frosty and the days are warm. It has not frozen here the half of an inch this winter. The old Tennessee river is very high at present. It is full from bank to bank. There has been rainy weather up the river some place, but not here.

Thomas Mains has gone home. He started the 21st of this month. I sent a letter to mother by him. She wanted to know what I wanted her to send me. She need not send any towel, for I have as many of them as I can take care of. But I should like to have my hat, and she can send me a pair of socks and gloves, if she wishes. You can send them by (the orderly) Ferguson or Thomas S. Mains, whichever comes first. And I should like to have one dollar's worth of stamps. I wrote a letter to mother a few days ago and sent her a ring for a Christmas gift. I would have sent you and Martha Jane each one but I had no more buttons from which to make them. If you send me some buttons I will make you one apiece.

I must wind up my epistle by subscribing myself,
Your brother.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Bridgeport, Alabama.
January 24th, 1864.

Dear Sister,—

I received your favor of the 15th and was truly glad to hear from you. This is a beautiful Sabbath day. It is as warm and nice as a spring day. We are blest with a warm climate to soldier in, and also good health.

You must not look for Thomas home yet a while, as I heard that he had not enlisted again. I wrote him a letter a few days ago but I have not got an answer yet. You said you could not get stamps to send with Mains. Basil Gordon is at home now. You can send them by him. I have a few yet but I use a good many. You will find enclosed a shell ring. Please give it to Martha Jane. It is not as nice as it might be, but it is the best one I have.

Harriet, it is now nearly time for me to mail my letter

so I must close. If I send it today, you will get it this week, but if I should not mail it till tomorrow, you would not get it till next week. Write soon. Give my compliments to all.

I remain,

Your brother.

ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Ooltewah Station, Tenn.

March 3rd, 1864.

Dear Mother,—

I embrace this opportunity of writing a few lines to let you know that I am well and hearty and still living in the country. I hope when these lines reach you, you will be well and hearty. It is a little difficult for me to write a letter to you worth reading, as I have not had one from you since last I wrote.

This is a beautiful spring day, except it is a little windy. March came in very rough, being rainy and cold, but this morning it cleared off and is now warm. The trees are budding and some of them are in leaf. Everything looks prosperous except the Rebellion, and it hardly looks at all

Mother, you were speaking about me buying the home place. I would buy it, if it can be had on reasonable terms, not for my own benefit, but because you need some man person on the place, and if I live to get home, I will fill that place if you desire, whether I buy it or not. I mean I will answer for the farmer. I have been plowing and planting potatoes down here in Dixie, but I do not expect to reap the reward or production of the soil for my labor. I have helped to plant three bushels of potatoes. I work a little to pay for my board.

Jackson Dishong and I are still at the same house guarding property. Jack is well and looks better than you ever saw him. He is a good civil and moral man, but not religious. Religion is scarce here, even with professed Christians at home.

Bazil Gordon brought me 25 cents worth of stamps. Also a pair of socks made of red, white and blue. They had no stars in them but I can soon wear them in. I was very glad to get them, mother. I have some money that I should like for you to have, but I shall not send it by mail, unless you are needy. Dan Henderson has sent on for a furlough.

If he gets one, I shall send by him. We drew two months' pay, twenty-six dollars. (\$26.)

I shall close for the present. Write soon and make the girls write. If they won't write, whip them. You need not think I have not time to read letters, for I have.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Ooltewah Station, Tennessee

March the 9th, 1864.

SOLDIER'S FAREWELL

Fare you well my darling, so fare you well my dear,
Don't grieve for my long absence, whilst I'm a volunteer.
Since it has been my fortune, a soldier for to be,
Content yourself my darling, and don't you grieve for me.
I am going to Chattanooga to tarry for a while,
Far from my true lover, about a hundred miles.
The cannon's loudly roaring, the bullets swiftly fly,
The drums and fifes are sounding to drown the deadly cry.
See how she rings her lily white hands, how mournful she
does cry!

You will go and join the army, and in the war you will die.
In the center you will be placed, and in the battle slain.
It will burst my heart asunder, if I never see you again.
We will mount upon the battery and turn the wheels around,
We will shout and cry out victory all over southern ground.
We will march up to Knoxville, and there we'll raise the sound
We are bound to whip old Longstreet, wherever he is found.

Copied by Robert Walker, Co. H, 90th Reg't. O. V. Infantry.

Dear Sister,—

I am well and hope these lines will find you enjoying good health. I have been looking for a letter from you till my eyes are sore. So I thought I would write you one, and fill the sheet up with a song, as I have written everything that I knew and more too, since I have had a letter from home.

I am on guard at the old stand of Mrs. Watkins I have as good a time here as I could wish for. She washes

for us and boards us. Dishong and I have been here over a month.

I shall close for the present. Write soon.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Ooltewah Station, Tennessee.

April the 11th, 1864.

Dear Sister,—

With pleasure I embrace this present opportunity of responding to your kind and welcome letter of the 3rd inst. I was truly glad to hear that you were well, and I hope that this will find you in the same enjoyments of health. I am well and hearty, and as lazy as is profitable.

I sent my shadow home three or four weeks ago. You did not say whether you had gotten it or not. I also sent thirty dollars with Daniel Henderson. You did not say anything about that, but I suppose you have got it before this time. Dan has come back safe but I have not seen him yet. I have not been in camp yet today, but I am going as soon as I quit writing.

You said Isaac Marshall was going with Kate Trimmer. I know him as well as I know his aunt, and I was tolerably well acquainted with her.

Well, Harriet, we have some nice weather here and some nice times to suit it. 'There was a two days' meeting at Ooltewah. Commenced last Saturday. There were some very fine looking young ladies there. A great many of them got Yankees for beaux, and those who did not were badly disappointed. There have been several marriages here since our brigade came, but not any out of the 90th. They are not on the marrying list.

The boys from Saltlick township are all well, except T. S. Mains. He is on the mend.

Harriet how would you like to be a prisoner? We have two female prisoners here in our brigade. They were taken for spies, and I guess they are spies sent here by Joe Johnson. They came into camp, they said, to buy Confederate money. I think they will pay pretty dearly for it, too. One of them pretends to be crazy, but she is not crazy, but she is a fool without sense.

Now Harriet, I shall close hoping to hear from you soon. Give my respects to all. I wrote a letter to-day to

Martha Jane and directed it to Nelsonville. If she is not there she can send for it the first chance.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Ooltewah Station, Tennessee.

April the 28th, 1864.

Respected Sister,—

With pleasure I embrace this opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know that I am well, and hope this will find you enjoying good health. I have nothing of importance to write, but it is the supposition of all that we shall move in a few days, so I thought I would write while I had the chance. When we are on the march, we have a very poor chance for writing. When we move, I shall have to come down to army fare again, but I guess I can stand it. I have been a feather bed soldier for nearly three months. Yesterday we had orders to turn over to the government all unnecessary baggage and to keep just as little as we could get along with.

The weather here is very nice. The woods are green and look as forward now as they do the last of May in Ohio. The wheat fields look beautiful. The wheat is about knee high and very even on the ground. If the citizens here do not get a good crop this season, they will certainly come to want. They have but very little meat and no hogs to make any, and if a sheep happens to get fat and won't bleat for the Union, the soldiers confiscate it for a Rebel. Chickens and geese receive the same treatment. You have no idea how different a country looks after an army passes through, from what it did before.

Harriet, I heard that you and Martha both had soldiers for beaus but did not hear who they were. If I were going to guess, I should guess Isaac Colman for one and Worley Priest for the other. I suppose Martha does not go to see hers very often now, as she has gone to Nelsonville. You had better make yours stay all the time, for you and mother are certainly very lonesome by yourselves. But you had better be lonesome than be as the citizens are here. They have plenty of company but nothing to feed them on, and if they had, they would keep it for themselves.

Thomas S. Mains is still at the hospital, but he is able

to run around. He is coming here today. We are only a half mile from the hospital.

Harriet, I have helped plant thirty acres of corn this year. Most all of the farmers are done planting.

The next time you write I want you to let me know where Thomas is. I have written to him several times but I cannot get a reply. I suppose I don't direct the letters right but I can't help it, for I don't know how to direct them now.

I will tell you a little joke that passed off here last Sunday, but I will not mention any names. There was a young man who belongs to Co. H, 90th Ohio, from Saltlick township, who fell in love with a young lady here by the name of Mary Ragen. This Co.H man went out to Ragen's last Sunday evening, with the calculation of keeping company with Molly, but he did not get any opportunity of speaking to her on that subject without asking the question before the old folks, so he started back to camp. When he got to the picket line, he had no pass, so the pickets took him up to the general, and he had to tell where he had been and what he went for. So the next day he wrote her a note stating that he would be glad to pay her a visit on Thursday evening, if it was agreeable to her and her mother, and for her to send her reply to his request with the bearer of his note. Molly read the note and then called her mother and showed it to her. They talked a while, and then told the bearer to tell him his request was granted. Tonight is the night for him to go back, but I will bet my hat that the old folks won't go to bed when he comes. I shall write in my next how he comes out.

Write as soon as this comes to hand, and oblige,

Your brother,

ROBERT WALKER

TO PATIENCE WALKER

July the 22nd, 1864.

Dear Mother,—

I received a letter from you a few minutes ago, and with pleasure I resume my seat to answer it.

With regard to the 90th being cut to pieces by the Johnnies, that is false. We are within two miles of Atlanta, and the artillery is shelling the city. Yesterday we drove the Rebs about four miles. Their loss was heavy but ours was slight. We have just heard that General McPherson was shot off his horse today. We did not hear whether he was killed

or not, but he fell into the Reb's possession. If he is not killed, it is the worse for himself, for he is a prisoner. I would rather be killed than captured. We shall be in possession of Atlanta in a few days, unless they stand a seige. Our troops are on three sides of the town, and have got the Reb's communication cut off. Their works here are strong, but Sherman will not advance on them. In a few days he will have them entirely surrounded, and then he will leave them alone and let them feed themselves as long as their rations last. They cannot get any more at present.

I shall close and mail this without an envelope. I received two stamps. Please write every week. I will write as often as I can. Give my respects to all inquiring friends.

This is from your son.

ROBERT WALKER

(Note.—This letter was folded and stamped without an envelope, and bore the post mark of Nashville, Tenn.)

TO PATIENCE WALKER

Atlanta, Georgia.

September the 11th, 1864.

Dear Sister,—

Once more I clasp my pen to write you a few lines to let you know that I am still on the land among the living. My health is good, and it is the sincere wish of your son that this will find you well.

Mother, it has been over a month since I have had a letter from any of you.

I suppose you have heard of our grand raid on the Macon rail road. We drew off from Atlanta on the 25th of August, and one corps fell back across the Chattahoochee river, while the rest of the army marched in the rear of the Rebs. They followed the corps that crossed the river. They thought that Sherman had crossed the river and was in full retreat, and they made a picnic and had a big dance in Atlanta over Sherman's retreat. There were ladies who came to the dance from Macon and Jonesboro. But to their surprise, we had not retreated. On the morning of the 29th we reached the Montgomery railroad and destroyed it for about twelve miles. And on the morning of the 1st, we struck the Macon railroad between East Point and Jonesboro, and destroyed twenty-five miles of road. But the Rebs had found out where we were,

before we got to the road, and had marched all their force to Jonesboro, except one corps, which they left to hold Atlanta. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the 1st, we met the Rebs at Jonesboro with considerable of force when we came where they were. The 14th corps was on the right of the railroad and the 4th on the left. Our regiment deployed on the left as skirmishers and started forward. We charged their skirmishers and drove them from their rifle pits. The 14th, on the right, charged their works and carried them, capturing 18 pieces of artillery and two thousand prisoners, including one general. The loss in the 14th was tolerably heavy, but I do not know how many they lost. The 4th's loss was light. Our regiment lost nine wounded and not any killed. Company H came off all right without the loss of a man. Wm. J. Dishong was struck with a spent ball and it made a black place on his arm, but this we did not count a wound. As I have turned to the last page, I see I have not room to give you any particulars of the raid, but we lived high. We took everything we wanted.

Mother, we have now gone into camp to receive a visit from the pay-master. If you want any money, let me know and I will get it for you. But if you don't, I guess I won't sign the rolls this time.

If you have not started that paper and envelopes that I wrote for, you need not send it now for I can get plenty.

Since the capture of Atlanta, I have cuffed my old hat so badly that it wants a new one. I should like it if you would send me one by mail. One about like the one you sent me last winter. I expect we shall lay in camp here two or three months. There are no Rebs within thirty miles of here, except their scouting parties.

Write soon and tell me about the draft. I remain,

Your son,
ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Pulaski, Tennessee.
November the 14th, 1864.

Dear Sister,—

With pleasure I resume my seat for the purpose of answering a letter which I received yesterday, that had no name signed to it, but I suppose it was from you.

Well I shall tell you what I have been doing for the

last three weeks. You know I wrote a little note to mother when we were at Chattanooga, and told her that we were expecting to take the cars for Bridgeport, Stevenson or Decatur. Well, we slipped up on it. All of the rest of our corps went on the cars, and we had to guard the wagon train through from Chattanooga to Pulaski. We had a very pleasant time, only we had not. We marched from eight to ten miles a day, through the mud. Sometimes the mules would stall, and then you know we had to help roll the wheels. But we got to Deckerd Station on the 8th, against noon. Of course we stayed there and voted in the afternoon. Our regiment polled two hundred ninety-one votes. Two hundred eighty were for Lincoln and eleven for Mac. You know I put in one as long as your arm for Lincoln, and I think it will elect him by a large majority. On the 9th, we took the road again for Pulaski, and yesterday we got here safe and sound. This morning I had to wash, scrub and scour, and get dinner. But getting dinner did not bother me as much as to find something to get.

Well, that is enough of nonsense. Harriet you can tell Mrs. Barnes that I shall not get to see Marion again, soon, for there are no troops here except our corps. The rest of Sherman's command is somewhere near Atlanta, Ga. Our corps is a department by itself now.

I must close for the present, hoping to hear from you soon. If Billy McClurg comes up soon, I wish you would send me some socks. Tell Maria Barnes to hook me another pair of gloves and I will send you the money to pay for them.

We have not had any pay for ten months, but we will get it soon.

Direct my letter 1st Brigade, 1st Division, 4th Army Corps, Pulaski, Tennessee.

ROBERT WALKER

TO HARRIET WALKER

Nashville, Tennessee.

December the 15th, 1864.

Dear Sister,—

With pleasure I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th, which found me well. I hope these few lines will find you enjoying good health.

For the last few days we have had some old-fashioned winter, down here in the Sunny South, but it is getting considerably warmer than what it was.

This December finds us on the same camping ground we occupied two years ago, but the Rebs are some closer to us now than they were then. There has not been a December since we have been in the service, but what we have been at Nashville. Last winter we were here with prisoners.

Harriet, I had almost come to the conclusion that you were either all dead, or else had no paper on which to write, for I could not hear anything of you at all for several weeks. But at last I got a few lines from mother, written on a sheet which I had written on while at Chattanooga. Then I knew it was for the want of paper, that I did not get any letters from home. When I got that one from her, I thought as it had been over the road twice and had only two letters on it, I would write another and send it back again. So I wrote two lines and sealed it up, but before the mail went out, I came to the conclusion that sense had better rule passion instead of passion rule sense, so I burnt the letter and wrote another one.

Billy McClurg has got back to the regiment. He left us in August. When he left I told him to bring me a hat, but he stayed at home so long that I gave up his coming back, and I sent home for one. I did not need it, so I let Thomas Turner have it.

I expect to stay in the army as long as the war lasts, but not as a soldier. I have a sight for getting a detail in the commissary department as a clerk. I have been examined and have got my recommendation. If I get that I shall stick to it after my time is out. I would not get any extra wages while I am a soldier, but after my time would be out I could get seventy-five dollars per month. Do not say anything about it to any one, for fear I slip up on my calculations. I shall know about it in a couple of weeks.

I shall close for the present. Write soon.

I remain, your brother,

ROBERT WALKER

P. S.—Now forget not my request, and do not show this to anyone outside of the family, except James.

(Note.—This letter was never mailed, as the writer was mortally wounded on the same day that he wrote it. He was taken to the field hospital at Nashville, where he died, aged 23 years and 29 days. The two following letters explain his death.)

(Dove) "The United States Christian Commission sends this sheet as a messenger between the soldier and his

home. Let it hasten to those who wait for tidings."

Franklin, Tennessee.

December 20, 1864.

Patience Walker:—

Your son, Robert Walker, Co. H, 90th, O. was wounded at Nashville the 1st day of the fight. The wound is in the right thigh—a flesh wound. It was at the Field Hospital that I saw him. Would have written sooner but have been waiting on the wounded and dying ever since, DAY and NIGHT. He was in good spirits when I saw him.

Yours truly,

NORMAN JONES, Delegate U. S. C. C.

Hd. Qrs. Co. H, 90th O. V. I.
Huntsville, Ala., Jany. 15th, 1865.

Mrs. Walker.

Madam:—

I suppose you have heard ere this of the death of your son Robert, who was wounded on the 15th of Dec., while gallantly advancing in a charge on the enemies' works. Robert was a good brave soldier, and his death is deeply felt by all his comrades, and none more than myself.

But as it was the will of our heavenly Father that he should give up his life while in the bloom and vigor of youth, it is ours to submit uncomplainingly to the decree of Him who careth even for the sparrows that fall to the ground. My prayers and fondest hopes are that he may now be enjoying the fullest happiness in that better land, where sickness, sorrow, pain, or death are felt no more forever.

I did not get to see Robert after he was wounded. I suppose all of his personal effects were left on the battle field. One of the musicians of our regiment brought me his portfolio which I will send to you the earliest opportunity that presents itself. In it was the letter addressed to Harriet, which I forwarded on the 16th of December. With this I will send a letter which came to the Co. for Robert, which I supposed to be from you.

I must now close. I tender you my heartfelt sympathies, and assure you that while you lose a beloved son, I lose an esteemed friend and fellow soldier.

I am, Madam, your obedient servant,

THOMAS TURNER, 1st Sergt. Co. H.

P. S.—I will do my utmost to have you furnished with a final statement, so that you may attend to drawing his back pay and bounty to which he is entitled.

Very respectfully, T. TURNER.

BROTHER, WHEN WILL YOU COME BACK?

By E. W. Locke, Army Poet and Balladist.

The shadows of evening bring home to the hearth
The loved ones who patient have toiled through the day,
Though glad be the greeting and hearty the mirth,
Our hearts ever turn to the brothers away.
We ask is he pacing the sentinel's beat,
Intent for a sign of the near lurking foe,
Or wearied with marching through mud, rain and sleet,
He lie in his blanket, his pillow the snow.

CHORUS

Brother, dear brother, when will you come back,
Back to the hearts ever loving and true?
While your camp fires are burning,
Our fond hearts are yearning;
Brother, dear brother, we're praying for you.

The cold winds of winter sweep down from the hills,
With wailings more dismal than ever before;
We think of the blast that our soldier boy chills,
And sigh to divide him our basket and store;
We know that but little he heeds his hard lot,
His long, weary marches—his coarse, scanty fare;
The cannon's loud thunder, the death-dealing shot,
But nerve him to suffer, to do, and to dare.
There's many a soldier lying silent alone,

Uncoffined, unshrouded, beneath the damp clay;
His kindred search vainly for head-board or stone,
Or some one to tell where his life ebbed away;
Though sad be the tidings from fields red with gore,
And Death reaps a harvest of brave and true men,
Dear Brother stand firm till the contest is o'er,
Then rush to the arms that will clasp you again.

